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Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

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Identical letters dated 10 December 2018 from the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission addressed to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

A high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, convened on 24 and 25 April 2018 by the President of the General Assembly pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) on the review of the peacebuilding architecture, provided Member States with the opportunity to discuss the report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707-S/2018/43). In parallel, on 25 April, the Council convened a briefing on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The meetings concluded with the adoption of two parallel resolutions on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, Assembly resolution 72/276 and Council resolution 2413 (2018), by which the Assembly and the Council (a) welcomed the presentation of the report of the Secretary-General; (b) invited relevant bodies of the United Nations, including the Peacebuilding Commission, to further advance, explore and consider implementation of the recommendations and options contained in the report; (c) requested the Secretary-General to present to the General Assembly an interim report further elaborating on his recommendations and options; and (d) requested the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly a report in connection with the next review of the peacebuilding architecture.

With a view to the implementation of the new resolutions, the Peacebuilding Commission, with the support of the Peacebuilding Support Office, agreed to convene a series of meetings to discuss the recommendations and options set out in the report of the Secretary-General. The meetings were organized around the following four themes addressed in the report: (a) operational and policy coherence; (b) financing for peacebuilding; (c) leadership, accountability and capacity in supporting peacebuilding and sustaining peace; and (d) partnerships for peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

On behalf of the members of the Commission, I wish to share with the General Assembly and the Security Council the main elements that were raised during this important process.

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At a meeting on 30 May, the Commission convened senior representatives of the United Nations system, including from the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Peacebuilding Support Office, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme, to explore ways to strengthen operational and policy coherence, synergies and complementarities in support of peacebuilding and sustaining peace. While noting that sustainable development and human rights constituted universal goals and were most often pursued as ends in themselves, Member States emphasized the importance of strengthening, where relevant, coherence, synergies and complementarities both at Headquarters and in the field, while respecting the mandates of each entity. They also welcomed the announcement by the Secretary-General of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative and highlighted the important role of peacekeeping as a platform for early peacebuilding.

Representatives of the United Nations system underscored the importance for the Organization of focusing more on areas such as funding, prioritization and sequencing. They also referred to the importance of close collaboration between Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and United Nations country teams in transition settings. A number of Member States expressed their expectations for the reforms of the Secretary-General to strengthen capacity in addressing diverse challenges and to have a positive impact on intergovernmental processes. Member States recognized the strengthened advisory role of the Peacebuilding Commission, in particular with regard to the Security Council. Delegations reiterated the importance for the Commission to better align its programme of work with that of the Security Council and to plan its activities further in advance. They also underscored their readiness to provide targeted advice, as appropriate, complementing the reports of the Secretary-General, in particular during deliberations on mandate renewals.

On 19 June, the Commission was briefed by representatives of the Office of the Controller, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the United Nations Development Programme and the Peacebuilding Support Office on the options set out in the report of the Secretary-General that pertain to financing for peacebuilding. Member States welcomed the meeting as an opportunity to better understand the various options and to reaffirm their support for peacebuilding. In that connection, several Member States reiterated the Secretary-General's call for a "quantum leap" in contributions to the Peacebuilding Fund, which should be unearmarked and provided over a longer term to ensure that support is both responsive and predictable. Delegations also welcomed stronger synergies between the Commission and the Fund, which were leading to mutually reinforcing action in peacebuilding and sustaining peace, including by enhancing coherence between the policy discussions of the Commission and the programmatic activities of the Fund. The importance of further discussing the various financing options was also recognized.

On 7 September, the Commission convened a meeting on leadership, accountability and capacity in supporting peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The Secretary-General delivered opening remarks, in which he highlighted that effective, responsive and accountable leadership that was provided with the right capacities and resources in support of national Governments and their populations was central to his vision for sustaining peace. He also noted the Commission's essential role as a "double hinge", not only between the various intergovernmental organs of the United Nations, but also between intergovernmental bodies and the activities undertaken by the United Nations system on the ground, in particular during transitions. In that regard, the Commission has promoted accountability, shared good practices, provided guidance and facilitated broader partnerships with other actors, including the World Bank. He also stressed that the role and capacity of the Peacebuilding Support Office as a hinge would be further strengthened through its integration into the Department of Political and Peacebuilding

Affairs in 2019 as part of the restructuring of the peace and security pillar. He also underscored the importance of the changes under way as part of United Nations reform efforts, including the revitalization of the Peacebuilding Support Office. The upcoming interim report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolutions 72/276 and 2413 (2018) will be a further opportunity to provide an update on progress in that regard. Member States reaffirmed their commitments to further deliberate and advise the General Assembly and Security Council, as appropriate. Delegations underscored, inter alia, the importance for the United Nations in the field to work in support of national Governments, aiming at strengthening their capacities, in particular with respect to development. They also recognized that the Commission added unique value by: (a) acting as a forum for convening a wide range of stakeholders, including international financial institutions; (b) providing a platform for country-specific and regional discussions, with the consent of all countries concerned, that could also bring together resident coordinators and the leadership of United Nations entities from an early stage; and (c) expanding space for sharing good practices in peacebuilding. Delegations also noted that the role of women was vital to peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

On 27 November, the Commission discussed the recommendations pertaining to partnerships for peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Member States shared their views and experiences on the challenges and opportunities of partnerships with regional and subregional organizations, civil society, the private sector, the World Bank and other international financial institutions. They reflected on the Secretary-General's recommendations on strengthening partnerships with relevant stakeholders and noted the importance of closer and more strategic collaboration with diverse partner organizations to ensure that the United Nations supports actors at all levels in their efforts to build and sustain peace. It was noted that the Peacebuilding Commission, in view of its bridging and convening role, should enhance collaboration with key partners, within and outside the United Nations system. The Commission's partnerships with regional and subregional organizations were recognized as a good practice. Member States noted that stronger dialogue between the United Nations and the World Bank on financing issues related to peacebuilding activities was required and they welcomed the decision of the Peacebuilding Commission and the World Bank to convene annual dialogues.

The meeting on 27 November also provided an opportunity for Member States to take stock of the series of discussions and to share their views on how to move forward. In that connection, and in response to resolutions 72/276 and 2413 (2018), the members of the Peacebuilding Commission wish to propose that the General Assembly and the Commission consider convening informal interactive dialogues to further advance, explore and consider the implementation of the recommendations and options set out in the report. Those dialogues, which could take place in early 2019 and be conducted at the expert-level, would provide a platform for all Member States to share their views on the status of implementation of those resolutions before the Secretary-General finalizes and presents to the Assembly the interim report mandated pursuant to those resolutions. That could be followed by a plenary meeting of the Assembly after the report is issued.

I remain at the disposal of the General Assembly and the Security Council to further explore ways to continue this important dialogue. I kindly ask you to circulate the present letter to the members of the Assembly and the Council and to issue it as a document of the Assembly and the Council.

(*Signed*) Ion **Jinga**
Chair
Peacebuilding Commission